1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

512 224 until they come upon the animal feeding. In former days much skill was required to creep noiselessly through the jungle until they were sufficiently near either to discharge an arrow, or, if the jungle were more open, to rush in upon the animal shouting and shoot it before it could escape. At the present day it is the dogs that scent out the pig and bring it to bay, when the natives shoot it with their arrows.

512 252 When a pig has been killed it may be tied up and carried to the camp on the shoulders of one of the hunters, or a fire may be lighted then and there and the pig eviscerated and roasted. A cut is made in the abdomen and the viscera removed. The cavity is filled with leaves, the joints of the legs are half severed and the carcase is placed on the fire and turned over and shifted until every part is evenly roasted. It is then removed from the fire, the burnt skin is scraped clean and the meat is cut up. Meanwhile the intestines or some of the internal organs are cooked and eaten by the hunters. The meat is tied up in leaves and is carried to the camp. If the pig be carried home whole the process of roasting it and cutting it up is performed in exactly the same way at the public cooking place of the camp, the meat being distributed only after it has been thus partially cooked.

512 223 If the hunting party should come across a civet cat (*Paradoxurus*) or a monitor lizard they would endeavour to kill it[1], but the main object of every hunting party is to obtain pork. Snakes and even rats are killed and eaten. Birds, though plentiful in the islands, are not often obtained, for the density of the jungle and the height of the trees in which the birds conceal themselves, make it very difficult for the natives to shoot them with their bows and arrows. A man does not care to risk the loss of his arrow in a chance shot at a bird. The Andamanese do not trap either birds or animals, though some of the birds, particularly the rail, might be very easily caught in traps.

512 222 As the hunting party traverses the forest they may come across roots or fruits or seeds, or wild honey, and these are collected and carried home. In the rainy season only small

[1] They are only eaten in the rainy season.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

combs of black honey are to be found[1], and these are generally consumed by the hunters on the spot.

The provision of the vegetable food of the community is the work of the women, who must also supply the camp with firewood and water. While the men are away hunting the women, attended by the children, cut and carry the firewood, and either remain in the camp making baskets or nets or other objects, or else go into the forest to look for fruits and seeds. Thus by midday the camp may be quite deserted, save perhaps for one or two old men and women, and a few of the children.

In the afternoon the women return with what food they have obtained and then the men come in with their provision. The camp, unless the hunters have been unsuccessful, is then busy with the preparation of the evening meal, which is the chief meal of the day. If a pig has been brought home whole it is cooked at the public cooking place and is then cut up. The meat is distributed amongst the members of the community and the woman of each family then proceeds to cook the family meal. The pork, after it has been roasted and cut up, is further cooked by being boiled. The family meal is prepared at the fire that each family has in its hut. The meal is a family one, partaken by a man and his wife and children. The bachelors cook and eat their own meal, and the unmarried women also eat by themselves.

After the meal is over, darkness having by this time fallen, the men may spend an hour or two in dancing to the accompaniment of a song sung by one of them with the help of a chorus of women. In that case they would probably eat another meal after the dance was over. Another favourite amusement for the evening is what may be called "yarning." A man sits down with a few listeners and tells them, with few words, and with many dramatic gestures, how he killed a pig. The same man may go on with tale after tale, till, by the time he finishes he has killed twenty or thirty pigs. Finally the whole camp retires to rest and nothing

[1] There are two kinds of wild bee in the Andamans. A small species makes black honeycombs in hollow trees, and these may be found at any time of the year. A larger species of bee builds white combs suspended from the underside of branches in tall trees. Such combs are found in abundance only in the hot season, and not at all in the middle of the rainy season.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

262 Thus one man of the North Andaman told me that he would not eat dugong when he was with me in the South Andaman. Another said that though he would eat the fish *komar* when he was at home, he would not eat it when he was in a strange place, as at the Settlement of Port Blair, for fear that it would make him ill.

In the North Andaman I was told that when a dugong is caught and the people feast on it they do not leave the camp till some hours after the meat is all finished, either to go fishing or hunting. The reason they give for this is that the spirits of the jungle and the sea may smell them, attracted by the odour of the food they have eaten and may cause them to be ill. They therefore remain in the camp and eat up all the dugong and do not venture out till they begin to feel hungry and must go in search of food. I believe that the same custom is observed in the South Andaman also.

A few other customs connected with food may be mentioned here. There is only one way in which a turtle may be killed[1]. It must be laid on its back with its head pointing towards the open sea, and a skewer of wood is then thrust through the eye-socket into the brain. The natives say that if a turtle were killed in any other way than this, the meat would be "bad," i.e., uneatable.

252 262 Turtle meat may only be cooked on a fire of the wood of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus*.

A pig is killed as it runs, without ceremony, but there is one special way in which it must be cut up. The pig is first disembowelled, and the joints of the legs are severed. The abdominal cavity is then filled with leaves, of which only certain special kinds are used. It is placed on a fire and roasted whole, and is then cut up. Should the carcase be cut up by any other than the traditional method, the natives believe that the meat would be "bad," and they would not eat it.

A number of beliefs relating to vegetable foods will be mentioned in the next chapter.

576 201 In several of the ceremonies described in this chapter it will be noticed that the weeping of relatives and friends occurs

[1] Turtle are captured alive by means of harpoons, and may be kept alive several days before they are killed and eaten.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

heads or jump overboard, and even at times try to alleviate their sufferings by swallowing salt water.[1] 271

8. In opening certain shell-fish[2] the adze is not employed, but one of the valves of the *Cyrena* is dexterously inserted between the lips, which are thus forced apart, after which the fish is killed with a knife or bladed arrow, and boiled; the *Tridacna crocea* and *Tridacna squamosa* are opened by inserting a piece of wood as a wedge between the valves,[3] afterwards the fish is despatched by stabbing it with an arrow point or blade; the various *Arca* species and the *Mytilus smaragdinus* are, however, not so treated, but are placed among a heap of burning logs for a few moments, the object being merely to part the valves, which would otherwise be a matter of some difficulty: when this is accomplished the shells are removed by means of the bamboo tongs (*kai-*[4]), and their half-cooked contents are transferred to a pot[5] (*būj-*) in which a little water has been placed; after being boiled a short time the gravy and flesh are eaten with the help of the shells. In former times oysters were eaten *cooked*,[6] but now their consumption appears to be confined to the inhabitants of North (and possibly also Little) Andaman: they give no reason for this change, but it may be due to their having occasionally suffered by feasting unconsciously on the poisonous, or at least indigestible, variety so commonly found in the mangrove swamps. 252 262 136

9. Dr. Day remarked that the mullet was their favourite fish, and "one day, having placed a quantity of different species before them, they helped themselves in the following order: . . . . *Chorinemus*, *Platycephalus*, horse-mackerel or *Caranx*, *Chrysophrys calamara*, and lastly *Tetrodon*, or frog-fish, which latter has generally the credit of being poisonous." My experience is that there are apparently no fresh-water, and but few salt-water, fish[7] which they will not eat. 262 136

10. It is a mistake to suppose that pigs were ever scarce in these islands, for though it was formerly more difficult than at the present day to shoot them, there is no lack of evidence to 136

[1] *Vide ante* "Medicine," paragraph 4.

[2] Viz., those of the *Pinna* and *Cyrena* species.

[3] This is only attempted when they succeed in surprising the fish before it has time to close its valves.

[4] *Vide* Appendix B, item 80.

[5] *Vide* Appendix B, item 18. [Note.—Water is boiled in a *būj-* by the ordinary process, and not by heated stones being dropped into it.]

[6] That Europeans should swallow these molluscs *raw* is a matter of considerable surprise to them.

[7] They prefer the fleshy part of the head to any other portion. To cut a fish is termed *chō·lke*, while to remove its head, tail, and entrails is styled *arwā·gke*.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

[136] prove that they are, and always have been, fairly numerous.[1] The pig hunts are most frequent during the rains, not only because these animals are then more plentiful and in better condition, but because it is no longer the *râp-wâb-*, or season of abundance of jungle fruit and honey; from this, however, it must not be inferred that scarcity is then experienced, for those who choose to help themselves need never be in want.

11. During the cool season, *pâ·par-wâb-*,[2] the people themselves are alleged to become noticeably thinner: this they attribute not to a deficiency of food, but to the meagre condition of the pigs, which are then breeding, and to the fact that the edible roots (or yams), and other fruits then in season are not fattening. There are six varieties of esculent roots, viz.: the *gō·no-*, *châ·ti-*, *kâd-*,[3] *bō·to-*, *mal·ag-*, and *tăg·i-*, which are eaten alone (preferably cold) and not with meat; their chief difference consists in the extra care in preparation which some require, in consequence of their very acrid flavour.

12. The *gō·no-* is cooked in three ways: (*a*) it is placed on the fire in the condition in which it is found until it is soft, when it is freed from the burnt earth and eaten; (*b*) the root, after being washed, is cut up into small pieces and boiled in a pot; and (*c*) after being washed and cut up, the pieces are wrapped in large leaves and baked on burning logs.

13. The *châ·ti-* is cooked in the first of the above-mentioned methods, or by surrounding it with hot stones,[4] and covering the whole with leaves and weights, in order to confine the heat as much as possible.

14. The *kâd-* is first cooked as found, the skin is then peeled off, and a number of thin slices are cut and placed in water for a couple of days, so as to lessen the bitterness of its flavour; afterwards it is either baked in leaves or boiled, as already described in speaking of the *gō·no-*.

15. The other three varieties are never boiled, but are placed on the fire without leaves, and the outer skin is removed before they are eaten.

16. The seed of a species of sea-weed, known to them as *tô·no-tòng-*, on which turtles and dugongs feed, and which can only be obtained in small quantities, is carefully cooked and eaten as a relish.

[1] In his examination of a kitchen-midden near Port Blair harbour the late Dr. Stoliczka recorded that "the large number of bones of the Andaman pig is remarkable."

[2] This is the period between the rains and the dry season, and lasts about ten weeks, between the middle of November and the middle of February.

[3] The *gō·no-*, *châ·ti-*, and *kâd-*, are very plentiful during the cool season, and are much relished.

[4] *Vide post* "Stone Implements," paragraph 1.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

262
221
137

(a)

either cooked or uncooked.
- ‡*mâng-
- ‡*ī·til-
- dō·gota-
- jâ-
- ŭ·dala-
- kŭa-
- §chá·kan-
- *bō·to-kó·ko-
- kŭ·ara-
- §pū·lia-
- §pū·lain-
- *pi·dga-
- §gel·dim-
- *ó·rta-tāt-
- *†§chaij-
- kār·ega-
- ūd-
- §ñgē·bēr-
- §ē·mej-
- *eng·ara-
- §lō·gaj-

(N.B.—The best fruits, and those which are most abundant, are in season during these months and at the commencement of the rains.)

(b)

- †ó·ropa-
- §pâ-
- *†kai-
- †§kai·ta-
- †chób-
- †ŭ·dorma-
- *á·bnga-
- §
  - jū·mu-
  - ngá·tya-
  - bá·taga-
- *ká·pa-
- pī·cha-
- §pai·tla-
- *kār·ed-[1]
- §* jang·ma-[2]
- *jī·ni-
- †pŭ·ta-
- *pór-
- *ám-
- *†mŭ·twin-
- tá·tib-
- *eng·ara-

During the *pá·par-wáb-* (cool season) and *yé·re-bō·do-* (dry months) the six varieties of edible roots mentioned above (*vide* paragraph 11) are also eaten.

(It will be understood that those fruits that are unmarked in the above list are eaten in the ordinary way).

262
[263]
252

20. Many fruits they merely suck for the sake of the flavour ;[3] others are eaten with fine wood-ash,[4] taken from the hut fires *in lieu of sugar*, to diminish their extreme acidity,[5] while a few are cooked,[6] and the stones of several[7] are cracked for the sake of their kernels. The favourite fruits are *dō·gota-*, *ó·ropa-*, *kón-*, *chób-*, *jâ-*, *pâ-*, *kai·ta-*, *kār·ega-*, *chá·kan-*, *jū·mu-*, *ngá·tya-*, *bá·taga-*, *ñgē·bēr-*, *pū·lia-*, and *pū·lain-*.

21. The fruit of the *ñgē·bēr-*, *chá·kan-*, *pū·lia-*, *pū·lain-*, *pai·tla-*, *gel·dim-*, *lō·gaj-*, and the seeds of the three above-named varieties of mangrove (*i.e.*, *jū·mu-*, *ngá·tya-*, and *bá·taga-*), are freed from their husk or rind and boiled in water until quite soft; when cold they are cut in slices, and left to soak for two days or more in salt or fresh water, after which they are baked in leaves, or again boiled in a *būj-*.

252

22. The Andamanese are, now-a-days at least,[8] extremely particular over the cooking of their food, and will not eat certain

[1] This is a small yellow fruit, the seed of which, after being sucked, is broken, and the outer portion eaten while the kernel is thrown away.

[2] This is a small red fruit, about the size of a bean or filbert, containing one stone ; it is wrapped in leaves and baked, because they say that if eaten uncooked it would cause them to forget their way in the jungle, as well as entire loss of memory on all points.

[3] These are marked in the preceding paragraph by a *

[4] Their immunity from scurvy may not improbably be due to the chemical combination of the acid, contained in many of the fruits, with the potash of the burnt wood.

[5] These are marked in the preceding paragraph by a †.

[6] These are marked in the preceding paragraph by a §.

[7] These are marked in the preceding paragraph by a ‡.

[8] They are very expert in spearing their fish, which they consume in a half-cooked state (Anderson) ; Symes also writes that "they throw the food on the fire, and devour it half broiled."

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

fruits and vegetables, much less fish, flesh, or fowl that is raw,[1] or, as far as I could ascertain, even underdone.[2]

23. On ordinary occasions the meals are prepared by these estimable wives in the absence of their lords, but when their labours in procuring wood and water are exceptionally heavy, as on gala days, or after a very successful hunt, the cooking is performed in the special fire-place[3] set apart for the purpose in each community, by some male volunteer, who, when the meat is partly done, distributes[4] it among those present, leaving them to complete over their own fires the necessary preparation of their several shares.[5]

24. Sometimes it happens that the animal is cut up and distributed without being even partially cooked, but the person undertaking this duty is under a tacit obligation to help the slayer of the animal and himself to the last two portions

25. Small pigs, if caught alive, are sometimes kept and fattened up (*chī·lyuke*) for slaughter;[6] with these, as with others killed while hunting, the same system is observed: the entrails, lungs, liver, kidneys, &c., are first removed (*jō·do-lòi·chrake*), and replaced by leaves (*koktâ·r-râ·mke*), to which they set fire—care is always taken to select such as, being entirely free from scent and taste, will not affect the flavour of the meat—the object of this is that all parts may be equally heated when the carcass is placed on the burning logs, where it is left, not until thoroughly

[1] A recent writer (*vide* "Bombay Gazette," May 24, June 7, July 1, July 5, August 2, 1881), in giving an instance of the skill of these savages in shooting fish, affirms that he observed "that most of these fish were just scorched on hastily-lit fires and devoured at once half raw, care being taken that the children present (there were no women) had their full share of the spoils." I am, nevertheless, sure that he is mistaken in supposing that the fish were otherwise than thoroughly cooked, for besides having made close observations myself at the homes, on the point in question, I have made careful inquiries of the aborigines, who assure me (as do also the Hindustani attendants, who have paid numerous visits to the tribes in Middle Andaman) that they never eat fish, flesh, or vegetable until it is thoroughly cooked.

[2] Exception, however, must be made in regard to turtles' eggs, which are eaten with other food or alone, as the case may be, and which, though preferred soft boiled, are sometimes eaten raw: they are among the articles of food proscribed to an *á·kà-yáb-*. Dr. Day says he has seen them "cook a prawn by placing it inside the bowl of a pipe which they had been smoking!"

[3] This is generally an open space at one end of the encampment. [The *jâr·awa-* have a separate hut, which is used exclusively for cooking purposes.]

[4] The "cook" is under an obligation to taste a morsel before all present; should the chief happen to be there he receives the first and lion's share; after him all the men are helped, and then the women and children, while the remainder falls to the share of the distributor.

[5] During the process of cooking all that the Andamanese Soyer requires in the way of impedimenta are a skewer, *chám*, and a pair of bamboo tongs, *kai*. (*vide* Appendix B, items 70 and 80)

[6] If the pig should die a natural death while being thus kept it would be eaten, unless visibly diseased.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

252 cooked, but until the bristles have been singed and the skin dried sufficiently to allow of the dirt adhering to it being scraped off; this done, the remains of the charred leaves are removed, and the tendons at the joints being severed (*pū·nuke*), the carcass is cut up (*wâ·ratke*) and distributed; while thus engaged, the operator not unfrequently helps himself to choice morsels which he may chance to find done to a turn, as his perquisite. The lining and flesh of the stomach are usually first disposed of;[1] the skin of the entrails, after being thoroughly cleansed, is also frequently consumed.

252 262 26. From the account given under "Initiatory Ceremonies"[2] it will be seen that the kidney-fat and omentum (*reg-jī·ri-*) are considered as luxuries from which the young of both sexes must abstain during a certain period. The lungs, liver, and eyes are also eaten, and they are quite of a mind with the Chinese in their estimation of "crackling"[3] (*ōt-â·gam-*, also *ōt-gō·ma-*), which they consider one of the choicest parts, and enjoy so much that they are even willing to run the risk of offending the *chôl-*[4] by baking their pigs, rather than eat them boiled.

262 27. When, from some circumstance or other—such as possibly a death from sunstroke[5]—the dread of these demons is paramount, and they boil their pork, it has been observed that, as their pots are small, they remove each piece when partially cooked to make room for others, which afterwards, in the same way, are in turn replaced until thoroughly done; the reason given is that the flavour of the whole animal is thus equally distributed in every portion. On other occasions when the pig is not broiled whole on burning logs, or apportioned among the several families of the community for cooking in their own huts, the flesh is baked in leaves by means of heated stones (*lâ-*), which are placed between alternate layers of the meat; in every case the chief concern appears to be that the whole should be so wrapped in leaves that none of the juices be dried up, though every portion be thoroughly well done.[6]

[1] Experience and inquiries have alike failed to find an explanation of the following peculiar statement made by Dr. Day:—"The children and weakly persons eat sucklings, the bachelors and spinsters use those of medium size, whilst adults prefer the stronger boar."

[2] *Vide* paragraphs 15–17.

[3] The skin of the iguana is also eaten, but that of the *paradoxurus* is thrown away.

[4] *Vide ante* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 15.

[5] *Vide ante* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 16.

[6] In this respect they differ much from the Australians, who "never take the trouble to cook their food, but merely tear off the interior skin of the animal and, after holding the body over the fire for a few minutes, eagerly devour it in its uncleaned state, and frequently eat so voraciously as to be in a state of inactivity and torpor for several hours afterwards" ("A Ride across the Frontier of Victoria," by P. H. Eagle).

2: Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

28. For brains and marrow they have a great *penchant*, and, in order to extract the latter, will often crush the smaller bones with their teeth, while they break up the larger ones with a stone hammer.

29. The blood of the turtle only are they careful not to spill,[1] and this, though not preferred to the flesh, is considered a dainty, and is eaten separately, after it has been boiled in its own shell until quite thick.

30. They do not preserve the carapace of either description of turtle, but, having removed the flesh, place the shell over the fire, that all the remaining fat may be melted, when—with an appreciation worthy of a City alderman—they ladle it into their mouths with *Cyrena* shells, which thus serve as spoons. So great a delicacy do they consider this that the shell is finally broken up and divided, that no particle may be lost! This fat is largely used in the manufacture of *kòi·ob-*, and it may be judged how highly they prize the unguent since they are willing to deny themselves this dainty rather than allow their supply to run short.

31. Food is preserved by placing it on the small grating (*yŭt-leb-tă·ga-*)[2] above the hut fire,[3] or in the following rather peculiar fashion:—having procured and cleaned a length of bamboo (*fem. sp.*), they heat it over a fire that the juices contained in it may be gradually absorbed. When this is satisfactorily accomplished, half-cooked pieces of pork, turtle, or any other food,[4] are packed tightly into it, and the vessel is again by degrees put over the fire, in order to heat it slowly, lest the rapid expansion of the meat should cause a crack; when steam ceases to issue forth, the bamboo is taken off the fire, and, after the opening has been closed by leaves, is set aside with its contents until a meal is required, when it is replaced on a fire, for, as I have remarked in another place, it is a peculiarity of these savages to eat their food in an almost boiling state.[5] As soon as the meat has been once more thoroughly baked, the bamboo is split open with an adze or other

[1] To kill a turtle they pierce the eye with a skewer or arrow (*ī·dal jĕ·ralike*); when the flappers and belly-shell are removed (*tŏ·latke*), the animal is cut up (*wă·ratke*) prior to distribution.

[2] *Vide* "Habitations," paragraph 5.

[3] Jean de Lery, in the account of his adventures among the Indians of Brazil (about 1557), describes the "wooden grating set up on four forked posts; . . . and as they did not salt their meat this process served them as a means of keeping their game and fish."—(E. B. Tylor's "Early History of Mankind," p. 262.)

[4] They have not acquired a liking for either beef or mutton, but are very fond of fowls, rice, dhall, sugar, and sweets of all kinds; it is strange, therefore, to find in Colonel Tickell's paper that "fish they were indifferent to, also to rice."

[5] *Vide ante* "Anatomy and Physiology," paragraph 8.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

implement, and all take a share in the feast.[1] Meat thus prepared will keep good for several days.

32. I alluded just now to their method of preparing the seeds of the *Semecarpus* and *Artocarpus chaplasha* for consumption during the rains; it is as follows:—The outer husk, or skin, having been removed, a quantity of the fruit is placed on a wooden platter, and each person present renders assistance by partially sucking (!) the various pieces, which, after this preliminary process, are half boiled in water, and then wrapped up in large bundles of leaves, and buried in moist soil; no mark is made over the spot, but there appears to be no fear of forgetting it, though several weeks usually elapse before the monsoon breaks, and these decaying deposits are dug up, when the smell, as may be supposed, is most offensive to all but those who are to the manner born; by them, however, strange to relate, it is evidently highly appreciated. The next stage through which the seeds have to pass consists in freeing them in water from the decaying matter, and drying them in the sun, or over the fire, where they are left in nets (*châ·panga-*[2]) or leaves until required for use, when they are again baked. With this exception no food is dried in the sun, nor is anything salted or intentionally smoked, though this last cannot fail to be, to some extent, the result of their mode of storing food, as described in the previous paragraph.

33. Besides the various fruits already mentioned as in season during the dry months, yams and honey are very abundant; as their method of treating both fruits and yams has been already described, it now remains for me to notice the ingenious way in which they procure honey, and to name the special trees which, flowering in succession, afford ample material from whence the bees produce a more or less abundant store.

34. At the close of the monsoon one of the large jungle trees, called by them *rár-* (*Eugenia* sp.), comes into bloom, and though no honey is made from its flowers, it is said to act beneficially on the bees as a purgative, and to prepare them for the commencement of the honey season.[3] The *lē·kera-* (*Leguminosæ* sp.), blossoming a little later, is the first honey-yielding flower; the *dü·mla-*,[4] *chī·lib-* (*? Diospyros densiflora*), *ó·ro-* (*Chickrassia tabularis*), and *châ·dak-* (*Rubiaceæ*) coming next into season, enable the bees to produce large combs, but the finest are found after the *pâ-* (*Semecarpus*), *bâ·ji-* (*Sterculia* (*?*) *villosa*), *yē·re-* (*Sterculia* sp.), *jī·dya-*,[4] have

[1] *Vide post* "Hunting and Fishing," paragraphs 30 and 31.
[2] *Vide* Appendix B, item 22.
[3] Hence *ra·rke*, (to) clean.
[4] The botanical names of these have not as yet been ascertained.

145 582 to about 60 to 65, if he reaches "old age." Except as to marriage at an earlier age, about 18, these figures apply fairly to the women also, who, however, live somewhat longer than the men, retaining in old age both health and mental faculties.

163 [853] **Reproduction.**—The marriages are infructuous, though barrenness is uncommon, a couple rarely producing families of even moderate size and many none at all. The child-bearing age is from 16 to 35; weaning is much delayed.

291 147 **Endurance.**—Left to themselves the Andamanese go stark naked and with head uncovered, except that the women wear, as clothing and not ornament, one or more leaves in front and a bunch of leaves tied round the waist behind, or a tassel of leaves all round. Jarawas, however, of both sexes have been seen entirely naked. They dislike and fear cold, but not heat, though they avoid exposure to the sun; and being accustomed to gratify every sensation as it arises, they endure thirst, hunger, want of sleep, fatigue and bodily discomfort badly. Want of sleep, such as occurs at their dances for occasionally as much as [482] four days and nights, exhausts them greatly. A man's load is 40 lbs. and his distance 15 miles for a day or two only. After that he will rest, whatever the urgency.

● 252 262 **Food.**—The food consists of fish, pork, turtle, iguana, "wild cat" (*paradoxurus sp.*), shell-fish, turtle eggs, certain larvæ, and a great variety of fruit, seeds, roots, and honey, and is plentiful both by sea and land. They never starve, though they are habitually heavy eaters. The food is always cooked and commonly eaten very hot. As much as possible of an animal is eaten and the Andamanese, like most hunters, have found out the dietary value of tripe. The Andamanese are expert cooks and adept at preparing delicacies from parts of animals and fish.

142 **Skin.**—The skin, which is smooth, greasy and satiny, varies in colour from an intense sheeny black to a reddish brown on the unexposed parts and also on the collar bones, cheeks and other prominences of the body. Its general appearance has been likened to a "black-leaded stove." The scalp, the lips and nostrils are black, and there are black patches on the palate. The soles of the feet are brownish yellow. The Bojigngiji Group (South Andaman) are the darkest, and among the Onges parts of the face are a light reddish-brown. The Jarawas are distinctly fairer than the rest, the general colour being a deep reddish brown. Leucoderma occurs on the fingers and lips.

Hair.—The hair varies from a sooty black to dark and light brown, yellowish brown and red. The general appearance of it is sooty black or yellowish brown. Except on the head the hair is scanty, but not absent: on the head it grows in small rings, which give it the appearance of growing in tufts, though it is really closely and evenly distributed over the whole scalp. Limited baldness is unknown, but temporary general baldness after disease occurs with a weak growth [307] of the hair afterwards. The hair is not shaved, except on the head and eyebrows, and each tribe has, with many fantastic individual variants, its own [145] method of wearing it. It turns grey at about 40, but white hair is not common.

Shaving is "woman's work" and was performed by small flakes of quartz, but nowadays flakes from the kicks of glass bottles are substituted. It is effective and close, but a painful operation on an European's face, as I proved by personal experience many years ago.

Bodily Parts.—The mouth is large, the palate hard and highly arched, the lips well formed. The hands and feet are small and well made. The ears are small and well shaped, the eyes are generally dark to a very dark brown, bright, liquid and clear, but prominent with slightly elevated outer angles and become dulled with age. The teeth, in the young, except amongst the Onges, are white, good and on the whole free from disease. Those of the Onges are irregular and discoloured. As age advances the teeth generally lose their whiteness and become worn, but without much caries. The teeth are roughly used without any care whatever. Dentition is early.

164 **Diseases.**—The muscular strength of the Andamanese is great, but their vitality is nevertheless low, and the apparently robust quickly die after sickening

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

515 people. Furthermore, the Onge skin is very soft and more elastic than is usual
[147] in human beings. For us, clothed and with a less resilient skin, a trip through the thorny Andaman forest means many small, bleeding scratches. Not so for the naked Onge. – To cover them with clothes would endanger their health. Nakedness inures them to the sudden changes of temperature so frequent in
[513] Little Andaman and preserves them from catching cold when sleeping, uncovered, on their rough, unprotected bed of boughs. As with primitives all over the world, clothes make them miserable and, I may add, very ungainly and dirty.

515 Part of their general negligence with regard to hygiene is their carelessness about their teeth. They never clean them. They do keep bamboo sticks,
[413] 1 mm thick and 8 cms long, tucked into their hair to be ostensibly used as toothpicks ; but the sticks, to tell the truth, are more of an ornament than a tool.
142 The Onge's teeth are so compact and sound that there is no space between
[164] them for food particles to collect. No caries or decay of any sort are to be noticed. In a number of skeletons that I dug up from under the beds in communal huts, the teeth gave evidence of one peculiarity : old people had worn
[283] them down to the root. The Onge habit of using teeth as working instruments, to prepare fibre for ropes and in many other circumstances – apart from their permanent chewing on hard foodstuffs – explains this fact.

515 As a consequence of never washing, the natives' hands are sometimes extremely dirty. The Onge themselves are conscious of this. I shall give an
226 instance. It so happened that I arrived in Nachugé, on the west coast, toward the end of March, when the sea was teeming with migrating sardines. In Little Andaman sardines can weigh up to a pound ; but a normal catch, obtained with small hand-nets cast from canoes among shoals of fish imprisoned by the low tide within the coral reef that surrounds the island, contains specimens of
[264] every dimension. All are eaten as soon as possible. The quantity of fish brought back to the camps on such occasions puts all inmates to work and induces everybody to abandon all other occupations for the time being. In the low tidal waters the men push their canoes from rock to rock, using them as receptacles for the abundant food so easily collected. In some "pockets" nets prove unnecessary : the fish is gathered in handfuls and rapidly thrown into the canoes. The hecatomb ends when the canoes are filled to the gunwales. In no other part of the world have I seen food made available to primitive people in such large quantities and with so little effort.

252 Back at the camp, the sardines are "graded" according to size and cooked immediately. They are not washed or cleaned, the inner organs are eaten to-
[263] gether with the flesh. Men, women and children feverishly take part in the cooking ; the fish is boiled without salt. All the natives then plunge their hands
264 avidly into the heap of sardines. From time to time the women clean their
515 hands by rubbing them on the *naquinēghē*. Very soon this garment becomes
[231] extremely smelly. Men and children clean their hands in a different way : by rubbing them on the dogs. On such occasions, everything and everybody smells of fish for days and days. The first to become clean again are the dogs, because they hate to be smeared with fish and wash themselves in the sea as soon as they have a chance.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

3. Food

In the absence of men, women also are good at fishing inside the coral reefs. They do this with two small nets used together. Their catch generally consists of brilliantly coloured fish with yellow, red, green, blue, black and white stripes forming varied and attractive designs. The Onge eat all fish without discrimination. My Indian collaborators, on the other hand, considered the coloured fish dangerous to their health and refused to cook them ; the Sacred Vedas, in fact, advise the avoidance of brigthly hued fish and of fish without scales. I wanted to try both kinds, and found them perfectly palatable, tasty and harmless.

No tool, used for any purpose by the Onge, ever gets a cleaning. Cleanliness, I repeat, is unknown in Little Andaman. See how food is prepared and disposed of ! Care is taken only not to throw big pieces of meat intended for cooking directly on the bare ground ; but once it is cooked, food is treated with the utmost disregard for dirt, dust, cobwebs and other such things. It is usually left lying around on large leaves spread out for the purpose. The remains of the Onge's orgiastic meals are kept out of reach of the dogs on the ceiling of the huts, to be covered with flies when no fire is lit directly below. Sand and grit may get wedged annoyingly in the teeth, but not such impalpable things as dust or cobwebs. The use of unclean food is not repugnant to the Onge. The same can be said for water polluted by dogs drinking and bathing in it, or by the presence of putrefying carcases. In the west of Little Andaman I saw some Onge avidly drinking from pools of a blackish water with a revolting sulphurous smell. After thoroughly filtering and boiling it, I too used such water, for it was the only water available in the neighborhood. This caused no ill effects. My Indian men considered it perfectly healthy and invigorating, and drank it safely in its natural condition.

The Onge eat with their unwashed fingers, without the help of tools. On rare occasions they use platters made of the flattened-out stems – or bracts – of *areca* palms. They sometimes carry these platters when travelling, but of course never wash them although they become coated in rancid, greasy filth. They soon assume a dark colour and a truly revolting appearance – aside from the awful smell. A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN's statement – that the Andamanese paint their bodies to neutralize the unpleasant smell of food that clings to them after their orgiastic feedings – shows only indirect knowledge of the life and manners of those people. Even the horrible flatulence that follows their pork orgies is not considered an inconvenience ; yet it is much more revolting than all the other body odours.

Although the Onge observe few hygienic precautions they do follow a number of medical practices, not all devoid of beneficial effects. Here are a few more remarks on their eating and drinking habits. For about six months of the year, between November and April, water is scarce in Little Andaman. Every kind of fresh water is then considered good by the Onge, regardless of whether it is a murky infusion of rotting leaves or afloat with the putrefied

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

312 caracases of small animals. During the droughts, marine hermit crabs, of
271 which a profusion is found in Little Andaman even far from the sea-shore,
[196] often choose to die in fresh-water pools. They are not removed from the pools.
[415] A nautilus shell is sometimes used as a drinking vessel ; failing this, the Onge
[516] lap up the water like animals, on all fours, directly from the pool. Since they are
231 very fond of dogs, man and dog drink together from the same tiny pool, often holding no more than a few pints of water. Dogs reached Great Andaman as early as 1857 ; they came to Little Andaman much later. Before that time there were no dogs in the Andamanese Archipelago. They soon became the natives' cherished and much appreciated assistants in the hunting of wild pigs. Many unhygienic habits followed the appearance of dogs in the Andamans.

271 The Onge have no idea of boiling water for the purpose of disinfection ;
[149] nevertheless their health does not appear to suffer at all as a result of the polluted water they drink. When, in 1952, I dug a well near the left bank of
123 Dugong Creek on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, I was compelled to fence it in so as to prevent dogs from drinking it and bathing in it.

264 Dogs lick everything that smells of food, including the cooking pots,
[231] and the pots are not washed before use after the dogs have licked them.
[136] Swarms of flies of different species and small coleoptera of a brilliant blue colour, one of them 6 mms long, follow the dogs after they have "cleaned" the pots by licking them. They line the inside of the pots with a crawling, living coat, moving restlessly around in search of food. One species of fly, which is of a brilliant, metallic green colour, has a peculiarly disagreeable smell. All the flies lay eggs while feeding, but the eggs are soon devoured by the hovering bluish coleoptera. Thus in a few hours all traces of organic matter disappear from the pots. Subsequent exposure to fire undoubtedly destroys the germs that would otherwise be certainly dangerous to human beings.

415 The Onge no longer use indigenous pottery for cooking. Its disappearance
177 is recent, as the sherds that litter Little Andaman prove to the investigator.
[323] Excavation in modern kitchen-middens leads to the same conclusion. During the last war, quantities of empty petrol drums were washed up on the Andaman shores. They were found in such numbers that the Onge have not yet used them all up : after 1952 I found several of these containers abandoned, untouched, in the jungle. The primitive inhabitants sawed each container in two cylindrical halves, thus transforming them into cooking pots. The result was that within a few years the fragile ancestral pottery of the Onge disappeared altogether. Furthermore, aluminium pots were distributed among the natives after 1952. Probably the indigenous pottery will never again reappear.

[252] Each half of a petrol drum is large enough to contain a pig, or a turtle weighing
262 150 lbs, cut into pieces. Only the flesh of these animals is consumed by the
[231] Onge ; the nourishing broth is poured out onto the ground or left in the pot to be lapped up by the dogs. The Onge believe that broth is unhealthy and avoid drinking it.

251 No matter how prodigious the catch of sardines or other fish, unobtain-
[185] able at other times of the year, no attempt is made at storing part of it in view of future shortage. The Onge are unacquainted with methods for preserv-

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

262 and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted
123 fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our
[775] good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was
[825] stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals.
Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the
513 different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and
123 uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

262 With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the
114 fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its
[832] lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe
261 they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs
● 252 only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are
[231] cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health
and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is
266 completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young
262 sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surround-
[888] ing fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I
123 helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they
553 found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cuc-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

262 Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several
751 succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very
[825]

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

621 rather than order is given by the leader. Cipriani observes.[1] "For
622 instance, it is very amusing for them to think that a man gives orders to others. This means that they have no real chiefs. A so-called Onge
[592] chief, or raja, is only the head of a group of families living in the same communal hut, and giving not orders but only advice. It is the most experienced man who is considered chief in the hut, but his authority if at all never goes beyond that hut. In other words no real chief exists in the Little Andaman. Notwithstanding this, there is a perfect order in the island, because nobody interferes with the work or encroches upon what can be considered the rights of others."

124 As is common to most of the aborigines, the Onges are generally
162 not very receptive when the questions about their numbers and other groups are enquired. The headman says that there are many many fifty Onges. However the number of the Onges are approximately 600.

22 As regards the mode of living of the Onges, the hunting and collec-
231 ting are the basis of their economy. The domestication of the plants
241 i.e. art of agriculture is not known to them and it is only 30 years back, the dogs arrived in the island and have been domesticated by the Onges for chasing the pigs, their main prey. In the absence of agriculture, the natural products of the sea and the forest provide them with all
[262] their items of diet. Animal and vegetable products and honey are the main items of their diet and there has been, so far, no introduction of salt in their diet. The most important victims of their hunting are pigs and turtles, the former is chased by dogs and are killed with great
252 cruelty. The cooking of the fish, meat, roots, tubers, jackfruits etc are
251 done by putting them under fire. Preservation of foodstuffs is not widely practised except the jackfruit seeds which are tied up in a small net inside water on the bank of some stream and taken out during rainy season, when the other vegetable foodstuffs are not available. On
146 the whole, the Onges have a very balanced diet with a fair richness of all the nutrients. In this connection the observations of Dr. Cipriani during his survey in the Little Andaman throws considerable light in
[157] their conditions of life. He has estimated the Onges as one of the happiest people of the world, who in spite of their primitive economy, are not the miserable victims of poor health, ill nutrition and oddities of life.

396 Some amount of artistry and craftsmanship have developed among these people. A canoe can be constructed by a man, all by himself from

[113] 1 Cipriani, L—Survey of Little Andaman during 1954; Bul. Dept. Anth.,

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

taste. The liquid content of these stems is so great that it makes them extremely heavy to carry. These lianas are very common all over the islands and anyone who knows them need never die of thirst. To get at the liquid one only has to break the stem and put it to one's mouth; if one puts a receptacle under the break, a litre or so of liquid can be obtained in a matter of minutes. When the first strangers came to the archipelago, the Andamanese watched them tear down parts of the forest, including these lianas, and tried in vain to protest at the vandalism. No one understood their protests, but they were right.

The forest abounds in trees whose fruits in season form an important source of food for the islanders. One is the so-called jackfruit, *Artocarpus communis*, which here grows wild, though various species are cultivated all over Asia. The fruits, which appear on the thickest branches as well as on the trunk, are smaller in the wild variety, rarely weighing more than thirty grams, but the yield is enormous and the islanders enjoy them for months, especially from March to May. The Onges call them *bulundanghe*, and roast them in hot ashes till the hard pulp and seeds are eatable; the latter, the size of a hazelnut but tougher, are the best part.

Another useful plant is the *Pandanus*, or screw-pine. On Little Andaman extensive areas are covered with nothing else, making progress very difficult owing to the twisting roots and the spines on the long, tough leaves. It seems to prefer the coastal areas, particularly the marshes, where it often grows into an impenetrable jungle. There are at least two species, one of which is gregarious. The other, which grows as isolated specimens, is longer leaved, with bigger fruits and stems like candelabra, standing up on an arch of roots, as though on stilts. With the leaves of this variety, fluted and easy to arrange like roof tiles, the Onges can quickly improvise a waterproof covering. The young leaves provide them with ornaments which they wear for their dances, while the pulp of the fruit, which looks rather like a pineapple, perfumed and delicately flavoured, is nutritious though somewhat stringy.

Along the coasts where there are no *Pandanus*, one very often sees something very different – mangroves. The islanders use the wood for their canoe floats, and for fixing pegs (see p. 122) and the supply is unlimited, as the growth and spread of the mangroves are assured by a number of factors which have made them one of the best

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

222 off, so that they may eventually recover, although they may take several years to do so.

The fruit they gather most, however, is the *bulundanghe*, a wild form of the so-called jack-fruit. This ripens a little later than the *danghecciò* at the end of April, and is the occasion of intense activity. Men, women and children swarm to the harvest, returning to the camp loaded every night. When fully ripe the *bulundanghe* fall open if rubbed between the fingers. I found the pulp very pleasant, but the seeds need the Onge stomach to cope with them. They would [185] in fact be suitable for storage over long periods as they do not seem to deteriorate, but the Onges would never think of this.

At no other time of year did I see so many baskets lying round the Onge camps, cast aside after use. As early as mid-March, impatient for the fruit, bitter but already fully grown to the size of a child's head, the Onges begin to strip the trees. When fully ripe the fruit are a yellowish-green, with a very wrinkled outer case, marked off as it were into tiny compartments, geometrical in shape, and mostly pentagonal. If one presses a finger on one of these it goes through into the fruit, which has the appearance of innumerable tiny cells, all separated by a membrane, each terminating in a seed at the central core of the fruit. The cells are an orange-yellow on the surface, becoming a very pale yellow inside when the pulp becomes softer. The seeds are covered by a sweetish orange skin, and are arranged regularly along the core, which is itself an extension of the stout, woody stalk.

The best parts to eat are the seeds and their sweetish skin. When the fruits are still unripe, sour, and hard, enormous quantities have to be gathered and carried to the camp where they are boiled until they are soft enough to open. The seeds are taken out and all the rest of the fruit is thrown away. When properly ripe, on the other hand, the seeds in their skins can be extracted on the spot, leaving the weight of the useless residue behind, lying in heaps under the tree. For eating, the skins are slit open with a *Cyrena* shell, the seeds [252] extracted, and the skins and seeds piled up separately on huge leaves. The leaves are then tied up with the usual cords of vegetable fibres, and the bags laid on hot ashes. The skins turn into a sticky paste, not bad tasting, and the roasted seeds are greatly improved to our taste, though still very indigestible.

[262] In April and May the Onges eat *bulundanghe* morning, noon and

their fires beside them. On the night of 4–5 April 1953, while I was sleeping with them in the communal hut at Berié-Abdalù a sudden storm drenched us all, forcing us to huddle together round fires under the more waterproof parts of the roof. Numb with cold, but cheerful, they began joking, singing[1] and dancing, men and women separately; this went on all night, and no one suffered any ill effects from the soaking.

The Onge lack of hygiene extends also to their cooking utensils, which are never washed. In recent years the ocean has provided the Onges with a generous and unexpected gift; currents running from the south of Asia have thrown up on to the shores of Little Andaman a shoal of empty petrol drums, stout metal cylinders 1·3 metres high and eighty centimetres in diameter. The astute Onges have patiently divided each one in two, each section big enough to take a large pig. Set on big fires these serve as wonderful cooking pots, and the Onges are delighted with them. Unfortunately, however, although they were thrown up all round the island, the supply is beginning to dry up, and they are rapidly being eaten away by rust.

To boil food, the Onges set the drums on two large logs, laid parallel, with a fire between them. Stones are rarely used to support the drums, although there are plenty about in the interior of the island. On the coast, and for a fair way inland, there is nothing but coral, hard but liable when it gets hot to disintegrate under the heavy weight of the cylinders filled to the brim.

In these gifts from the sea the Onges could prepare tasty broths, but they invariably allow nearly all the water to boil away, and the cooking process is not considered complete until all the liquid has gone. While it is boiling, however, they take care not to lose the fat floating on the top, which they adore. They have even invented a curious sort of dipping-stick for the purpose of skimming the fat off. They take a shoot about twenty centimetres long from a plant which disintegrates into fibre when chewed. One end is chewed into a loose 'brush' and no one present misses his turn to dip it into the pot again and again to skim off a mouthful of fat, even getting up in the night in their eagerness for it. One stick naturally does for everyone, men, women and children, the

[1] The Onge voice is not markedly different from the European. It has a musical quality, fairly high-pitched but never shrill; the Onges never raise their voices, even in anger – disagreements invariably end in a dignified silence.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The continual fighting between the Eremtaga and the Arioto led, as we have seen, to the gradual disappearance of the communal huts of the latter as being too vulnerable. Subsequently, the conflict still going on between foreigners and Jarawas completed the destruction, so that there are now no communal huts on Great Andaman. The ever-increasing violence of the punitive expeditions against the Jarawas put an end to their numerical recovery during the last fifteen years or so, and there may indeed now be none left. Today only their kitchen-middens, and the surviving Onges, remain to show us how the Jarawas must have lived.

The Jarawa middens are distinguishable from those of the Arioto by their inland position and by their content of freshwater shellfish and land gasteropods, not eaten by the peoples of the coast.

Like the kitchen-middens of the Onges, those of the Jarawas contain human bones clearly interred in graves, and not scattered among the refuse. This refutes the Arioto accusation against the Eremtaga of cannibalism, and that of the people of South Andaman (now vanished) against the people of North Andaman and the Onges; the remains of cannibal feasts would undoubtedly have been found among kitchen refuse and not carefully buried in the ritual manner, with the graves filled in with earth. And the Jarawas and the majority of the Arioto buried their dead in the communal huts, continuing a custom which originated while they were still on Little Andaman. In time variations arose, but this does not alter the evidence in favour of migration in ancient times from the south, via the Nicobars and Little Andaman.

The differences in culture between the islands can be explained by the ease with which primitive peoples forget. The Jarawas, for example, although they reached Great Andaman by sea from Little Andaman, forgot in a few generations the art of hollowing canoes when they were forced to live in the depths of the forests, far from the sea. Today, they have been free from the Arioto for some time, at least on the west coast, and have access to the sea, but they have not started building canoes again. In other things, however, such as burial rites, the Jarawas kept faithful to the old Onge customs; their middens show the same exhumation of the bones, the same cleaning, and tinting with ochre, and careful reburial.

The general similarity of the middens in Great and Little Andaman cannot be due to chance. Animal food, for example, has clearly

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

been cooked in the same way; the bones are never charred, but always have the appearance of being cooked in an earth oven. The direct roasting of large game over the fire, postulated by some authorities, including Brown, was never practised; the islanders preferred to go on as they had done since time immemorial, because it was more efficient – witness the traces of the earth oven which are to be found all over the world, including Europe. In Polynesia and Micronesia, and among the pygmies of Asia and Africa, it was widely used; variations when they arose did so as the result of local circumstances, like that of throwing water on the fire instead of using fleshy leaves, when there were none in the area. But the basic principle remained the same everywhere, and the use of the earth oven coincides with the geographical distribution of hunting, gathering and burial customs similar to those found in the Andamans.

In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light.[1] There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the hut, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.

We have already seen that on Little Andaman the introduction of the dog reduced the consumption of shellfish (and hence the rate

[1] The material recovered is now in the Anthropological Museum of the Andamans and Nicobars, which I helped to establish at Port Blair. The museum was inaugurated on 6 June 1955 in the presence of the Governor, Mr A. K. Ghosh and the chief Indian officials of the town.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

thought they were weeds and pulled them up. I never managed to see the plant in flower in the wild state, as this occurs at the height of the rainy season, and as no final definition is possible in the absence of the flower it remains unidentified.

The Onges take full advantage of the plant's properties as a bee-deterrent and in mid-March they eat honey, paint themselves, and dance, twenty-four hours a day. During these orgies I have seen a group of about sixty Onges demolish in a few days ten pigs and a dozen large, wooden vessels full of honey, with basket after basket of fish, caught every night by the women, who were apparently not in the least tired by the long daily treks into the forest after the honey. I can never look back on the Onges without a feeling of profound respect for their powers of digestion!

Yet another source of food for the islanders is the cicada. On Little Andaman there are a few species a little larger than the European variety and others rather smaller. The Onges collect the pupae as they emerge from the ground, usually in the mornings, and roast them as a great treat. They are actually very clean insects, which develop slowly under the earth over a period of years sucking lymph from the roots of the trees. When they emerge from the ground the pupae become leathery, but this presents no problem to the indomitable teeth of the Onges. Inside the cicada chrysalids are a mass of delicate tissues, so white and clean that one can understand the Onges' predilection for them.

On Little Andaman the cicadas chirp intermittently, with long silences; most of the day one hears nothing of them and when they suddenly start up the Onges fall absolutely quiet, terrified of frightening them away and losing their chrysalids.[1] In a few moments the whole forest suddenly echoes with a chorus of cicadas, as they all start up as one and then, a minute later, fall silent. Their intermittent chirping is not confined to the Andamans; it is a feature of several species throughout southern Asia. At Golpahar when I was in the middle of the forest excavating kitchen-middens I heard cicadas start up every day at 6.30 p.m., and then stop until the following day. In the mountains of South India, on the slopes

[1] The Onges do not seem to share the superstitions reported by Man and Brown among the Arioto, who appear to believe in fantastic connections between cicadas, the sun, and storms.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

tide goes down, the shoals are caught in the reefs stretching out to sea all round the island and the Onges leave everything to manhandle the canoes from pool to pool and fill them to overflowing. The water is almost saturated with fish, and the Onges go on and on until they have nothing more they can use to hold the catch. Nowhere else in the world have I seen anything like this wholesale slaughter.

The pilchards of the Andamans are rather larger than usual, some weighing as much as half a kilogram or more. The Onges catch them regardless of size and then sort them into lengths before cooking (cooking, needless to say, without stopping to gut them). Men, women and children work feverishly, plunging their hands into the heaving mass of fish so that they reek of it for days, together with the dogs, whose coats become the inevitable handtowels.

Every available vessel is used for the cooking, and the rest of the haul is cooked directly over hot ashes. The biggest are cooked alone; the smaller ones, in batches of half to one kilogram, are wrapped in big fleshy leaves, tied up with vegetable fibres and cooked for ten minutes or so, turned regularly all the while. To boil the fish, an entire netful of fish roughly equal in size is plunged into boiling water, and boiled as usual far too long for our taste.

Everyone cooks and eats at the same time until (temporarily) unable to eat any more, when the rest of the haul is laid on improvised racks with fires of green wood making smoke underneath. When, a few days later, all is gone, fishing begins again. And so life goes on for weeks, until the shoals have passed the islands.

The real fishing, however, is done by the men. The women use small nets about fifty centimetres in diameter, and about the same depth. The opening consists of a pliable cane, barely three centimetres in diameter, bent into a circle and tied with the ends crossing each other and projecting about twenty centimetres to form the handles. Each woman handles two nets, one held between the legs and the other in one hand, while the other hand pokes with a stick into the crevices in the reefs under the water to drive out the fish which have taken refuge as the tide goes out. Once found the fish are killed – very simply, by biting them between the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

eyes to crack their skulls – and thrown into the small basket every woman carries on her back, hung from the usual cord round her forehead.

The fish the women catch are all the varicoloured species which always haunt the coral shallows, bright red, blue, green, black and white in a wonderful range of stripes and patterns. The Onges eat them with no respect for design, and I must confess that I myself found them very good.

Besides fish, the women catch molluscs, crustacea, lobsters, crayfish, crabs and even some species of hermit crabs (the latter are baked alive in their adopted shells, and only the abdomen is edible). Lobsters are plentiful, some striped with green and blue and weighing up to half a kilogram, with a very delicate flavour, but the Onges do not seem to be greatly interested in them. They prefer fish and crabs; *Pterocera*, again baked alive, are great favourites and I quite saw why the kitchen-middens are full of *Pterocera* shells.

The men prefer to fish with bows and arrows made specially for the purpose, and very different from those intended for game, the shaft being made of very light hollow cane, instead of the solid wood demanded by the mechanics of the game-arrow. The fishing arrow is made of three parts, bound tightly into one. The point, now made of iron,[1] is about four to five millimetres in diameter and twenty to twenty-five centimetres long. Like that of the arrow harpoon, it is fixed by a tightly bound thread to a small stick or foreshaft about fifteen to twenty centimetres long and slightly smaller in diameter than the shaft proper (usually eighty to eighty-five centimetres long), so that the overall length of the finished arrow is a hundred and ten centimetres or more. The binding threads are held fast by a mixture of resin and beeswax, coloured with ochre in the case of new arrows.

I tried giving the Onges hooks and lines; they were intrigued by my demonstration of how to leave lines overnight and draw them in next morning loaded with fish, but no more. This was not superstition or fear of the unknown but sheer adherence to established custom. They have neither incantations, amulets nor propitiating

[1] Formerly made of *Tridacna*, or very hard wood. Some of the latter are still to be found, but all the other types of head – fish quills, bone, and *Tridacna* – have disappeared long ago.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

build it (when I wanted to acquire two for the new anthropological museum at Port Blair and the Indian Museum in Calcutta I had to bargain with the men recognized as the owners, although the price had to be distributed among all the members of the group).

The chief delight of the men on their fishing trips is the capture of a Giant Turtle. I have already described (p. 88) the spear harpoons which the Onges use to catch them. Once caught, the wretched animals are subjected to a form of vivisection utterly incomprehensible to the Western mind; they are literally cut up alive and the pieces thrown into the boiling cooking-pot. Nor have I ever witnessed anything so terrible as the way in which the Onges, in the absence of any suitable cooking vessel, or the materials for an earth oven, roast these turtles whole and alive over a slow fire. They seem totally unable to realize that animals can feel pain and laugh like children at the other atrocious tortures they unwittingly inflict not only on the turtles, but on every living thing that falls into their hands.

These marine turtles (as far as I was able to see there were no land turtles in the Andamans) yield a far greater amount of food than the dugong, and provide the islanders with both meat and eggs. Two species are common in the seas round the islands, *Chelonia virgata*, or the green turtle, and *Caretta imbricata*, which supplies the shells normally sold commercially. The Onges prefer the former, which are both meaty and more plentiful.

Turtle-hunting and egg-collecting is done by the menfolk. The method is very like that used for dugong and large fish, using the harpoon. Owing to their fear of the spirits abroad in the night, the Onges never go near the beaches between dusk and dawn, when it would be easy to take the turtles on land and immobilize them by turning them on their backs. They do know this trick, however, and use it when captured turtles (often weighing up to a hundredweight) are too heavy to carry in the canoe; the animals are turned on their backs and dumped on the beach ready to pick up later.

The Onges harpoon the turtles from canoes, preferably at night when the turtles are nearing the shore, which they never approach in the day time. When there is a moon the creatures are easily seen, and on dark nights the phosphorescence of the sea helps.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

metres in diameter. They are now used for the holy water in the new church of San Piero in Palco, in Florence, like those in the church of St Sulpice in Paris. Two valves of *T. gigas*, rather smaller, are being used for the same purpose in the church of Marco Polo in Viareggio.

Among the creatures the Onges hunt on the shores are crayfish, which can be taken in plenty in the streams of Little Andaman, although I found none on Great Andaman or in the Nicobars. As they were so common I assumed they were a known species and did not bother to collect any. In Madras, however, an expert on freshwater crustacea, Sri Sada Siva, told me that this appeared to be a new species and it would be well worth while returning to Little Andaman to collect further specimens, as the few I had brought are now lost. There are tens of thousands of them everywhere.

These freshwater crayfish are so tasty that they have entered into Onge folklore, and their tastiness is praised in song. They are baked on burning embers, without salt, as always, and just the charred shell is removed before they are eaten. The clean fresh water in which they live prevents any taint in the flavour. I must confess to having eaten them every day without realizing their importance as a possible new species. They are fairly large, about fifteen centimetres long, and almost black, in natural imitation of the dark rocks among which they try to vanish out of sight, although the Onges never fail to spot them. The males have slender pereiopods, with claws almost twice as long as the whole body; these the creatures thrust out before them, and so slender are they that it is difficult to catch a male with both pereiopods intact. After hatching, the young, which are identical with the adults as soon as they hatch and can therefore be sexed by the presence and absence of pereiopods, cling bunched together for several weeks, attached by their claws to their mother's swimmerets before making their way into the troubled waters of the rivers, where the great carp are waiting to prey on them.

Yet another freshwater creature eagerly sought by the Onges is one that is almost black in colour, a strange survival of some remote geological era. Like other members of the family it has no scales, and the mouth, armed with teeth, is not protractile. On Little Andaman I saw several specimens weighing over a kilogram, and

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

in the division of all meat. Certain cuts are the property of the hunter, of his helpers, and of his relations and after them, in order, of the remaining members of the group; everyone knows his position in advance. Each portion is tied round with a reed fibre, which is allowed to dangle out over the top of the communal cooking-pot ready to haul the meat out when required.

In the case of pork the prized cut is one which comprises the kidneys and the surrounding fat; this fat is called *cian*,[1] and is very highly esteemed. Some authors (Brown, for example) have stated that turtles and pigs are always cut up with the head ritually pointing towards the sea as otherwise the meat would be considered inedible. This is certainly not the case on Little Andaman, and I have never seen any such directional ritual among any of the Negritos, all of whom practise division of meat according to a prescribed order of precedence. Turtles at any rate are slaughtered facing up the sloping beach simply because it is then easier to hold the beast from behind and avoid its bite. Ritual there is, but usually with a good practical basis.

More ritual attaches to the way in which the game is carried back to the camp, and the wood to be used for the cooking fire. Pigs, killed and gutted, are tied in ropes made of *Ficus laccifera* and carried somehow on the back of the victorious hunter. If it is not far to the camp he will not bother to tie up the snout and feet, but otherwise the front and back legs are tied, and one long cord joins both pairs to the snout – again a practical ritual, giving the hunter a more compact weight to carry.

Man, Portman, Brown and others all say that each type of game has to be cooked over a fire of a particular wood. My own observations showed that whereas the ritual of dissection is inviolable, the Onges always use the first wood that comes to hand, regardless of its source, taking as usual the line of least resistance. This is again in keeping with the tendency of primitive peoples to expend only the very minimum of energy to achieve their object. Their religious beliefs and superstitions are not carried to the limit, simply because

[1] It is interesting that in their very restricted world the Onges have few standards of comparison or words to express condemnation or approval, and this word *cian* is used as one of high praise, applied to inanimate objects, animals, and people alike. The precise qualities which are conveyed by the word are difficult to evaluate in the absence of fuller knowledge of the Onge language.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

252 372 824 their love of existing with as little effort as possible is paramount. Since any wood is as good as the next for making a fire, the spirits conveniently have nothing to say in the matter. In other 782 222 circumstances material considerations lead to quite the opposite effect: when the Onges dig up roots or tubers they not only replace the earth, but cover the place with leaves, the ritual having the good practical objective of appeasing the spirits and ensuring further supplies.

171 224 The preservation of skulls for magical purposes or out of pure superstition survives mainly in Asia and Oceania. In Asia it coincides with other beliefs which demand the killing of domestic animals by strangulation. I have seen this practised along the high reaches of the valley of the Brahmaputra, particularly among the Abor, and the Nagas, and in many other tribes to the south of Tibet and China, all of whom preserve skulls. Head-hunting, found throughout southern Asia, in the islands, and as far as Oceania, is also practised in the areas where animal skulls are preserved.

171 The preservation of animal skulls, particularly bear skulls, is still practised in mongoloid peoples as far as the north of Asia; apart from the Andamans and the Nicobars, human and animal bones are preserved in many parts of Indonesia and as far as New Guinea. In the corona of small islands along the west coast of Sumatra the custom coincides with many others, as well as with certain types of huts and canoes, all present in the Andamans and Nicobars. A good example are the huts raised up off the ground on stilts, common in the Nicobars, Nias, Engano, Mentawai and various parts of Indonesia. The single-boom canoes of these areas, quite apart from their general similarity of structure, all have certain identical features, even to the method of fixing the lateral float of green wood, with pointed hardwood pegs stuck in it like spills. This, again, cannot be due to chance; it must be the effect of a very ancient cultural diffusion, now surviving only in a few specific areas.

224 531 462 The skulls preserved by the Onges have one point of interest; it is the duty of the wife to clean the trophies brought back by her proud husband and then paint them lovingly with lines of ochre. After every successful hunting expedition the wives can be seen busily painting, while the husbands look on with satisfaction.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Queensland and (as the Cape Bedford type) elsewhere. Oars, method of fixing the booms and float – all are similar throughout the area, including the Andamans.

Even game, once caught, is treated and distributed similarly by these peoples, from the Andamans to Oceania. Cooking is done without salt, in earth ovens (whether or not fire or red-hot stones are used) very different from those of Africa and America. The Semang and Aetà of today know how to make fire by friction, as do the peoples of New Guinea, Australia and Polynesia; the Tasmans also have the knowledge to do so, but prefer to carry burning logs with them on their journeys, like the Andamanese. In certain parts of New Guinea and perhaps in some of the Pacific islands (as in the Andamans) the art of fire-making was unknown or possibly forgotten until recent times; it is said that the Papuans of the Bay of Astralobius knew nothing of the art until the middle of the nineteenth century. But the only sure information comes from the Andamans, where, whether through ignorance or loss of knowledge, the art of fire-making is unknown and fire is always carried everywhere.

Among the objects typical of the Andamans and found also among the Semang, the Aetà, and other Oceanic peoples are the digging stick and the crude hatchet. The former, used for gathering edible roots and tubers, is merely a pointed stick, but every family possesses one. The hatchet is slightly more elaborate, having both handle and blade, and like the digging stick, occurs always in virtually the same form.[1] Objects woven from vegetable fibres are also very similar in appearance – often very durable and sometimes pleasing by any standards. In some places woven breast-plates are used in warfare, but here the Jarawas differ, using single sheets of bark.

These are but a few of the many examples which one can find of this striking similarity between these widely separated peoples. And alongside cultural similarities there exist others, anthropological and physical, which cannot be overlooked. Physically the

[1] This is simply a cutting tool fixed into a natural elbow in a suitable branch. The blade is fixed into the wood near the elbow, and the branch is cut off, so as to leave a short handle. The whole thing is reminiscent of a swan's head on a long neck, and is easily turned into a crude plane or adze by revolving the blade in the haft through a right angle.

islanders, in the absence of any means of working it, have not fully realized.

3 IGNORANCE OF FIRE

The islanders' present ignorance of fire-making may possibly be the result of cultural decline, but this is not certain. In the presence of the considerable additional evidence in favour of the antiquity of the Andamanese culture it is, however, more likely that it is genuine ignorance, persisting in a pre-lithic people.

4 ABSENCE OF SALT

Although there can be no proof, it can be reasonably postulated that very primitive Man had no salt, and that in the Andamans this ignorance has persisted over thousands of years, owing to strict isolation. It is unlikely that the use of salt would have been completely lost, had it ever been introduced.

5 PRIMITIVE METHODS OF COOKING

Apart from the accidental and very recent introduction of petrol-drum cooking, the Andamanese use only the most primitive form of earth oven. This method of cooking was certainly known in the Palaeolithic era; at the entrance to the well-known Barma Grande cave near Mentone I have myself seen in the basal layers a number of stones bearing the marks of fire, too numerous merely to have formed some sort of hearth, and clearly not used to support cooking-pots, as Palaeolithic Man had none which would have withstood heat. The form of earth oven still used throughout the Andamans is undoubtedly of extreme antiquity.

6 FOOD VESSELS

The people of the Andamans still use for honey hollowed-out logs similar to those seen in Palaeolithic wall paintings, which also depict baskets very like those still in use throughout the archipelago. The art of basket-making can be traced back at least to the later Palaeolithic era.

7 USE OF POTTERY

As with the other Negrito peoples, pottery was unknown in the earliest culture of the Andamans. Its appearance seems from the evidence of the